IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below. The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

storing one or more messages on a mail server, wherein each message is associated with an index time;

performing a full backup, wherein said performing the full backup comprises:

storing a version of each message of the one or more messages on a backup medium; and

storing a backup time corresponding to the full backup as a value of a particular named parameter associated with the mail server;

storing one or more additional messages on the mail server, wherein each additional message is associated with an index time; and

performing a partial backup, wherein said performing the partial backup ~~comprises~~ includes:

storing respective versions of selected messages on the backup medium dependent upon a difference between the index time associated with each message and the backup time; and

after storing the respective versions, modifying the value of the particular named parameter to a time at which the partial backup was initiated; and

wherein said storing a version of each message of the one or more messages on the backup medium includes:

determining, for each message of the one or more messages, whether the message includes an attachment;

if the message does not include an attachment, storing the message on the backup medium; and

if the message includes an attachment,

storing metadata associated with the attachment in an entry in an attachment index, wherein each entry in the attachment index corresponds to a respective attachment for which no other entries are included in the attachment index; and

storing a modified version of the message on the backup medium, wherein the modified version excludes the attachment.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the selected messages comprise a particular additional message of the one or more additional messages, wherein the particular additional message is associated with an index time that is dated after the backup time.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each message on the mail server is contained in a mail folder object.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein storing the backup time comprises modifying a data member of the mail folder object, wherein the data member is a defined parameter of the mail folder object.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the data member is defined by a manufacturer of the mail server.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4, wherein the data member is a PR_LAST_FULL_BACKUP property.

7. – 16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a mail server operable to store one or more messages in a mail folder object;

a backup medium;

a backup application configured to:

perform a full backup on the mail folder object, wherein to perform the

full backup, the backup application is further configured to:

store , as a value of a particular named property associated with the

mail folder object, a time the full backup begins as a

backup time of the mail folder object, and

transfer one or more messages in the mail folder object dated before

the backup time to the backup medium; and

perform a partial backup of the mail folder object, wherein to perform the

full backup, the backup application is further configured to:

store, in a data variable, a time the partial backup begins as a partial

backup time;

transfer one or more messages in the mail folder object dated before

the partial backup time and dated after the backup time to

the backup medium; and

after transferring the one or more messages dated before the partial

backup time, set the value of the particular named property

associated with the mail folder object to the partial backup

time stored in the data variable; and

wherein said transfer of one or more messages in the mail folder object

dated before the backup time to the backup medium includes:

determining, for each message of the one or more messages, whether the

message includes an attachment;

if the message does not include an attachment, storing the message on the

backup medium; and

if the message includes an attachment,

storing metadata associated with the attachment in an entry in an

attachment index, wherein each entry in the attachment

index corresponds to a respective attachment for which no

other entries are included in the attachment index; and

storing a modified version of the message on the backup medium,

wherein the modified version excludes the attachment.

18. (Canceled).

19. (Previously Presented) A tangible, computer readable medium including program instructions, wherein the instructions are computer-executable to:

    store one or more messages on a mail server, wherein each message is associated with an index time;

    perform a full backup, wherein to perform the full backup, the instructions are further executable to:

        determine, for each message of the one or more messages, whether the message includes an attachment;

        if the message does not include an attachment, store the message on a backup medium; and

        if the message includes an attachment, store metadata associated with the attachment in an attachment index, and store a modified version of the message on the backup medium, wherein the modified version excludes the attachment; and

        store a backup time corresponding to the full backup;

    store one or more additional messages on the mail server, wherein each additional message is associated with an index time;

    perform a partial backup by storing respective versions of selected messages on the backup medium dependent upon a difference between the index time associated with each message and the backup time.

20. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 19 wherein each of the selected messages is associated with a respective index time that is dated after the backup time.

21. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein each message on the mail server is contained in a mail folder object.

22. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein to store the backup time, the instructions are further computer-executable to modify a data member of the mail folder object, wherein the data member is a defined parameter of the mail folder object.

23. – 25. (Canceled).

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[25]]1, wherein said performing a full backup further comprises:

for each entry in the attachment index, transferring a single copy of a corresponding attachment to the backup medium

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said performing the partial backup further comprises:

selecting a particular additional message of the one or more additional messages to be stored on the backup medium, wherein said selecting comprises invoking a filtering member function supported by a mail folder object of the mail server.